



Housing Policy and Practices Advisory Group

Housing Planning and Practices Advisory Subcommittees Issue Synopsis and Recommendations

Subcommittee: Density

Group Purpose: The Density subcommittee's charge is to develop options in lieu of the use of a default density, develop incentives to develop housing affordable to lower-income households, and address unintended consequences which could include revisions of the default density in certain geographic areas.

Summary: The density subcommittee held two calls (Feb 17 and March 23). From the first call, ideas were developed and discussed in the second call. General agreement was reached to further explore two concepts. There was a lot of discussion on the idea of allowing more "by-right" development. While participants were open to the concept, the group did not reach consensus on specifics. The group also focused on the default density provisions of housing element law with potential modifications for more rural areas and as density is not a perfect proxy for affordability ways to encourage affordable housing to be built.

Issues Discussed:

- Having sites available at higher density doesn't necessarily mean project will be affordable to low and very low-income.
- There should be policies to ensure that affordability will more likely occur on sites identified for affordable housing like requiring lower-income sites to be available by right for residential development
- Greater flexibility in appropriate densities to facilitate lower-income housing based on geography is needed especially in unincorporated areas of counties which have a variety of types of places (Urban to Rural).
- Strengthening the no-net-loss statute (GC 65863) to expand criteria for replacement sites is needed to ensure appropriate sites throughout the planning period. Replacement sites are not required to go through the same analysis that the site identified in the inventory is so there is a possibility of the replacement site being not as suitable for development.

Proposals with Consensus:

A) Revision of Default Densities by Geographic Area:

The goal of this proposal is to provide some flexibility with default densities in non-urban or suburban areas of unincorporated counties or in other situations where default densities effectively pose a constraint to development due to market factors (e.g. Sacramento or when smaller geographical areas are designated urban due to their MSA, e.g. some Riverside

jurisdictions). Consensus was reached to advance this idea but the group did not agree on any specific details.

B) Explore Adding Overall Production Requirement (e.g. Massachusetts 40b):

This proposal is for HCD to do a white paper on the subject of what other States are doing to increase production. This paper would help advance the discussion of how to achieve more affordability but some members recommended caution about enacting these ideas outright.